A STUDY OF R. PARTHASARATHY'S POETRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE *DHVANI SIDDHANTA* OF SANSKRIT POETICS

SUMMARY

OF THE

THESIS

Submitted for the award of the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ENGLISH

Supervisor

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GURUKUL KANGRI VISHWAVIDYALAYA

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SUMMARY

Today, we have entered the 'twenty first' century where all kinds of boundaries-social, political, regional, national and international - are crumbling down. But it is a matter of lamentation that we Indians still fail to transcend the boundaries of colonial hangover. It is unfortunate that we know about India or endeavour to know further through Western eyes, irrespective of the validity of information. Not to talk about other scenes, even our own language and literature is being sacrificed for English language and literature. Here I never mean to discard English language and literature spoken and read, but my purpose is to underline the fact how slavishly we learn English language and literature, ignoring our own tradition of language and literature. In our country, we have a very rich tradition of critical inquiry known as Indian *Sanskṛt* poetics which flourished into the following schools (*Sampradāyās*) : *Alaṁkar* (Embellishment), *Rīti* (Style), *Guṇa* (Attribute), *Vakrokti* (Obliquity), *Anumān* (Inferance), *Aucutya* (Propriety), *Dhvani* (Suggestion), *Rasa* (Aesthetic Experience).

The present study aims at preparing an applicational model of the *Dhvani Siddhānta* to a text written in English. It endeavours to draw the attention of the literary world by focusing on the *Sanskṛt* poetics, which being an integral part of our legacy, is full of insights and perceptions. It putsforth the view that the *Sanskṛt* poetics has a power and richness in bringing out the aesthetic potential of literary texts – ancient or modern, eastern or western. In a word, the present study is a modest attempt to analyse the poetry of R.Parthasarathy in the light of the *Dhvani Siddhānta* of *Sanskṛt* poetics.

The credit of propounding the *Siddhanta* in a systematic manner attaches to *Ācārya* Anandavardhana who composed the scholarly treatise *Dhvanyāloka*. Defining '*dhvani*' Anandvardhana remarks that "*dhvani*' is the soul of poetry". Ancient *Ācāryās* hold : "*dhvani* is that type of *kāvya* where the word and the *vācyārtha* lose their independent entity and suggest some special meaning" with greater *cārutava* or beauty than the *vācyārtha*. Anandvardhana belauds '*dhvani*' in the following memorable verse :

Pratīyamānam punranyadeva, vastvastivāṇīṣu mahākavīnām|
Yat tat prasidhāvayavātiriktam, vibhāti lāvaṇya-mivāṅgnāsu||

प्रतीयमानं पुनरन्यदेव वस्त्वस्ति वाणीषु महाकवीनाम्।
यत्तत्प्रसिद्धावयवातिरिक्तं, विभाति लावण्यमिवाङ्गनासु।।[4]

The supreme contribution of Anandvardhana to the development of Indian poetics consists in the fact that he has attached greater importance to meaning than to word in the assessment of poetry. He stresses the element of '*cārutava*' and '*āhlāda*', that is, charm and internal pleasure as characterising *Kāvya*.

According to Anandvardhana, *pratīyamānārtha* which is a sort of *sfuraṇ* or internal inspiration which gives rise to *ramyatā* or beauty which, in its turn, engenders *camatkṛti* or thrill in the hearts of the *Sahṛdaya*. All in all, however, '*dhvani*' offers the best key to unravel the hidden beauties and charms of the poetic muse, and inspires the *Sahṛdaya* to explore the sweetness of the poetic flavours in a manner such as is denied to the poet himself. So it also depends on the reader how he interprets poetry and receives meaning from it.

Parthasarathy's *Rough Passage* is also important not only for *what it says* but also for *how it says*. He made a sincere effort to record the feelings of an Indian looking towards his own culture from the foreign lands as if he was feeling like a *fish of water.* The complex human feelings are best explained through the fusion and transmutation of images, symbols, metaphors, rhythms and tones. Parthasarathy is a

man of cultivated taste, he writes imagistic verse of austerity. He often revises and drops certain lines in order to make his poetry more suggestive and significant.

Parthasarathy's *Rough Passage* has three sections in three periods. The first period is from 1963-1967. It coveres the period from when he was twenty-nine and went to England to his return to India. During this period he wrote the section entitled *Exile*. Then he expanded a sequence of love lyrics which now consists of poems written between 1961 and 1974, entitling the section as *Trial*. A third section, *Home coming* consists of poems written between 1971 and 1978 – although lines can be found in them from poems of 1960s – which are mostly about the eight years he spent in Madras as a regional editor of Oxford University Press. Thus Parthasarathy's contribution to Indian poetry in English today rests mainly on *Rough Passage*.

In form and content he is perhaps the only Indo-Anglian poet to have keenly expressed the tension of bicultural, bilingual, psyche in effective communication of an experience.

As far as the *'dhvani'* or suggestive expression is concerned, Parthasarathy has variously emphasized the significance of '*dhvani*' in poetry. His pronouncements on poetry and poetic language equate with

those of the *Dhvani Siddhānta*. The pronouncements of Parathasarathy on poetry are not as comprehensive and multidimensional as the *Dhvani Siddhānta* is, however their relevance can hardly be ignored. They might be taken to be aspectual realisation of *Dhvani Siddhānta*. The present study affirms that Parthasarathy's poetry bears the striking, graceful qualities, alluring charm and elegance of expression caused by *arthāntara saṁkramita vācya dhvani* or suggestion of partial transformation, *atyanta tiraskṛta vācya dhvani* or suggestion of complete transformation, *vastu dhvani* or suggestion of fact, *alaṁkār dhvani* or suggestion of poetic figure and *rasa dhvani* or suggestion of aesthetic experience as discussed in the previous chapters.

Anandvardhana's *arthāntara saṁkramita vācya dhvani* or partial transformation is the first variety of '*dhvani*' or suggestion. It is one of the kinds of *avivakṣta vācya dhvani*. He holds that this '*dhvani*' sprouts when the suggested meaning or the '*vyaṅgyārtha*' is obtained from the '*lakṣyārtha*' born of the word-power of '*lakṣṇā*', because the '*vācyārtha*' in this case is not desired in its original form. Such kind of '*dhvani*' has been seen in Parthasarathy's poetry but it is not very prominent. The different literary and grammatical devices like image, adjective and culture, adopted by Parthasarathy seem to delineate the partial transformation

of '*vācyārtha*' to '*vyaṅgyārtha*'. These devices of '*dhvani*' underline the poet's self-definition for which Parthasarathy struggled to achieve in a different cultural and literary climate i.e. Europe.

Another sub-variety of '*dhvani*' i.e. *atyanta tiraskṛta vācya dhvani* or suggestion of complete transformation is also discernible in his poetry. In this *dhvani* '*vyaṅgyārtha*' occurs by completely disregarding the '*abhīdeyārtha*' and '*lakṣyārtha*'. Here too, Parthasarathy touches different words, having different traditional meanings. They produce a suggestive vibration in the expression and thus enhance the charm of the verse, give different shades to meaning and distinct association. It is by this sub-variety of '*dhvani*', poet converts his thoughts into expression and expression into meaning. By complete rejection of the literal and secondary meanings of the words like bark, snow, river and city, Parthasarathy putsforth the function of a poet whose poetry is full of suggestive vibration. He seems to talk about the growth of the poet towards maturity, emergence, regeneration, energy of soul with the help of *atyanta tiraskṛta vācya dhvani* or suggestion of complete transformation.

As the poetry, having reflection of practical life, has a universal tie and recognition, perceptible for all ages which brings *camatkār* to poetry, Parthasarathy's poetry too bears this aspect and

hence seems to be universally recognised. This *camatkār*, Anandvardhana holds, depends upon the following sub-variety of *vivakṣitānyapara vācya dhvani* : *vastu dhvani* or Suggestion of Fact having two subvarieties : *kavi-prauḍhokti-mātra siddha* or Fanciful Suggestion and *svataḥ sambhavi* or Possibility based Suggestion. R.Parthasarathy employs *vastu dhvani* in the poetic utterances of the exilic life.

Through a no. of images like mirror, river, city, hand, harlot, glass, stone, umbrella and dead metaphors like 'over the family album', 'the other night', 'in the distance', 'a pretty kettle of fish', 'slaked your thirst', 'Hand on chin', 'turned the corner', the obviously conveyed meaning is reversed by the poet's really intended meaning. Finally, the poet seems to move from the experience of frustration and waste to a philosophy of positive acceptance of facts. As a matter of fact it can be suggested that for Parthasarathy it is the past and the present that are for vital importance and for the future he is content 'to go through life'. Thus the main theme of his creativity is not merely of an Indian but of an artist who seeks excellency in both poetry and art in the given context.

Ācārya Anandvardhana says that poetry becomes lively with figures of speech - personification, simile, metaphor and the rest – having a '*dhvani*' causing beauty or *cārutva*. As already stated, this

type of '*dhvani*' is recognised in the suggestion of an '*alaṁkāra*' through an '*alaṁkāra*' or a '*vastu*'. According to the western tradition also, 'a figure, therefore, is effective only when it appears in disguise', that is to say, when it is shaded by the brilliance.

Western critics too consciously or unconsciously have recognised and considered '*dhvani*' to a great extent. The pronouncement of Western aesthetic thinking might be taken to be aspectual realisation of '*dhvani*' in a different critical climate.

Parthasarathy invariably employs natural expression so as to enshrine and invigorate strangeness and beauty. For this purpose, he also prefers embellished language which gives birth to *alaṁkār dhvani* or suggestion of a poetic figure in his poetry while explaining the complex human feelings. He makes the best use of poetic figures to glitter the meaning. He employs *alaṁkārās* also to beautify the subject by bringing together reality and abstract aspects. Simile, natural and man-made metaphors, symbols, paradoxes, *svabhāvokti alaṁkār*, *alaṁkār* with the touch of erotic and mythological allusions in Parthasarathy's poetry are remarkable for their suggestive aspect as well as for their *camatkār*. His poetic figures enhance the spontaneity, ease, sweetness and melody. Parthasarathy suggestively continues to show nature and human nature by employing *alaṁkārās*.

Rasa or sentiment is the soul of composition and in its

unhampered overflow, the poet's skill lies. Parthasarathy's poetry has also the uniqueness arising out of *rasa dhvani* or suggestion of aesthetic experience, which embraces unique use of *rasa*. Parthasarathy's poetry bears the different sub-varieties of *rasa dhvani* disignated as *rasa*, *rasābhāsa, bhāva, bhāvābhāsa, bhāvodaya, bhāva sandhi, bhāva-praśama* and *bhāva sabalatā*. In his poems, no doubt, it is very difficult to experience *rasa* as a reader does in *Hindi* and *Sanskṛt* literature, however, in his poems, the reader experiences the shades of *rasa*.

As a whole Parthasarathy's poems have affection and love for his native land and Tamil culture. This love creates conflict in his poetic self, but soon this conflict seems to be transformed into a creative energy. It is out of this struggle that R.Parthasarathy has succeeded in capturing the great heights of poetry. Thus it can be said that the ancillary emotions exhaustion, depression, excitement, despondancy, sorrow, despair, lonliness, disgust, remorse, guilt and maternal love - have been so patterned in the emotional texture of *Rough Passage* that by becoming inevitable supporters of the *aṅgin rasa, karuṇa,* they continually nourish it. The *aṅgin rasa*, pathos, has been evoked in its pure, deep and sublime emotional form. But there is no repeated heightening of the *aṅgin rasa*. It has not been untimely elaborated or untimely interrupted. To sum up it can be said that *Rough*

Passage by Parthasarathy seems commendably successful in stimulating the desired emotions and leaving the intended impression on the reader.

In short, Parthasarathy's poetry proves to its mark when put to the test of *Ācārya* Anandvardhana's *Dhvani Siddhānta*. It bears intensity of music, passion and emotions, exaltation, the irresistibleness of effect.. The secret of the appeal of his poetry lies in the fact that it is based on the fundamental qualities of complex human emotions and human nature. It aims to instruct. It comes from the heart of the poet and goes deep down into the heart of the reader. Keeping this account of Parthasarathy's poetry, it can be said that it has extra-ordinary power and velocity and unprecendented majesty which is too large to be summed up into this little endeavour. It bears all the possible varieties of *Dhvani Siddhānta*. It can be promptly appreciated that Parthasarathy has kept the *sahṛdaya's* angle in his view, while identifying the five varieties of '*dhvani*' as the constituents of poetry enumerated by *Ācārya* Anandvardhana.

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